

3. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein patterning the photoresist layer comprises removing the unexposed regions in the photoresist layer without removing the exposed dense and isolated regions in the photoresist layer.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:
the first layer comprises an insulating layer; and
patterning the first layer comprises providing an etching gas or an etching liquid to the first layer through openings in the patterned photoresist layer to form a plurality of dense and isolated openings in the first layer.

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cont. 5. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein:
the first layer comprises a semiconductor or a conductive layer; and
patterning the first layer comprises providing an etching gas or an etching liquid to the first layer through openings in the patterned photoresist layer to form a plurality of features in the first layer.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein:
the first layer comprises an insulating layer; and
etching the first layer comprises providing an etching gas or an etching liquid to the first layer through openings in the patterned photoresist layer to form a plurality of dense and isolated openings in the first layer.

A2 16. (Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein:
the first layer comprises a semiconductor or a conductive layer; and
etching the first layer comprises providing an etching gas or an etching liquid to the first layer through openings in the patterned photoresist layer to form a plurality of features in the first layer.

A3 29. (Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein exposing the dense regions occurs before exposing the isolated regions.

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cont. 30. (Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein exposing the dense regions occurs after exposing the isolated regions.

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Please add the following new claims:

33. A method of making a plurality of features in a first layer, comprising:
forming a photoresist layer over the first layer;
exposing dense regions in the photoresist layer through a first mask under a first set of illumination conditions;
exposing at least one isolated region in the photoresist layer through a second mask different from the first mask under a second set of illumination conditions different from the first set of illumination conditions;
patterning the exposed photoresist layer; and
patterning the first layer using the patterned photoresist layer as a mask;
wherein:
values of exposure dose and defocus used to expose the dense regions or the at least one isolated region are located in a respective process window outside an overlap region between the respective process windows; or
the first set of illumination conditions and the second set of illumination conditions have a different focus.

A4 34. The method of claim 33, wherein patterning the photoresist layer comprises removing the exposed dense and isolated regions in the photoresist layer.

35. The method of claim 33, wherein patterning the photoresist layer comprises removing the unexposed regions in the photoresist layer without removing the exposed dense and isolated regions in the photoresist layer.

36. The method of claim 33, wherein values of exposure dose and defocus used to expose the dense regions or the at least one isolated region are located in a respective process window outside an overlap region between the respective process windows.

37. The method of claim 33, wherein the first set of illumination conditions and the second set of illumination conditions have a different focus.

38. The method of claim 33, wherein:
only dense regions in the photoresist layer are exposed through the first mask;
and
only isolated regions in the photoresist layer are exposed through the second mask.

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cont.